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Patrick Moran – President

**SB 523 – State Employees – Cancer Screening – Paid Leave
Finance Committee
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Position: FAVORABLE

AFSCME Council 3 supports SB 523. Effective July 1, this bill allows state employees to utilize up to 4 hours of cancer screening leave in any 12-month period for cancer screening after obtaining approval. We admire the intent of the bill which is to ensure that all state employees have access to leave to get screened for cancer, even if their earned leave is all exhausted or they are new employees. We represent municipal employees in the City of Baltimore who have a similar program, and we have no reported issues with the program there.

Early detection is one of the best ways to prevent fatalities from cancer and this good benefit to extend to employees. At a time when public employers are competing for workers, these additional benefits go a long way. Early detection may also help make costs cheaper overall for the state health plan. We hope to work with the Department of Budget and Management this year and other employers we negotiate with to put a cancer screening leave program in place.

SB 523 is a good bill and we urge a favorable report.

The following states that have collective bargaining for state employees, AK, CA, CT, DC, DE, HI, IL, ME, MN, NE, NJ, NM, NV, OH, OR, PA, MT, RI, WA have a terminal point for negotiations, either binding interest arbitration, the right to strike, or a legislative process. These processes create a level playing field for both parties.

This legislation would create a mutual incentive to compel parties to reach an agreement around collective bargaining negotiations by instilling a binding interest arbitration process, whereby if the two sides cannot come to agreement through negotiations by a specified deadline the proposals.

From the two sides would be presented to a professional, neutral third- party arbitrator – hearing from witnesses and experts, with data and evidence – for consideration of all the facts involved with the purpose of determining which proposal is most appropriate to implement. The choice by the arbitrator would then be considered a binding resolution to be implemented by the Governor and exclusive bargaining representative for whatever appropriations are necessary to implement and fund the memorandum of understanding. The budgetary powers of the Maryland General Assembly remain unaltered.

SB 188 is a strong and positive step toward enhancing fairness, balance, and efficiency, and resolution. It follows a model that is well-established in other states and among Maryland counties. We urge a favorable report.

